(b) if so, whether Buckingham Canal is also included in that; and

(c) by when they are likely to be declared and developed for shipping and navigation?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No specific time-frame can be given in this regard at this stage.

Development of National Waterways Project in Kerala

1743. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a team led by the Chairman of the Inland Waterways Authority was sent to Kerala to hold discussions with State Government officials regarding the development of National Waterways Project in Kerala; and

(b) if so, the details and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The officers of the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) have held several rounds of discussions with the officials of the State Government of Kerala. Another round of discussions led by Chairman, IWAI with the State Government officials is also to take place shortly.

Four-Laning of National Highway No. 17 in Kerala

1744. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government had agreed to implement Rs.5000 crore highway project in Kerala to develop National Highway (NH-17) for four-lane traffic; and

(b) if so, the sectors in NH-17 already having four-lane and the sectors proposed to be taken up for converting to four-lane under the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) The entire stretch of NH-17 in Kerala from Karnataka/Kerala border to Eddapally nearing 421 km. length has been identified for four-laning

on Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis under National Highways Development Project (NHDP) Phase-IIIB. For this, preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) is in progress. At present, no stretch of NH-17 is having four-lane carriageway.

Completion of Bidar-Srirangapatnam-Ooty N.H.

1745. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of the Bidar-Srirangapatnam-Ooty National Highway project;

(b) whether Government have any clear plan for this project; and

(c) if so, the time limit and cost of this project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) to (c) Two stretches of Bidar-Srirangapatnam-Ooty road namely Humanabad—Jewargi road and Mysore—Ooty road have been declared as National Highways. The Humanabad-Jewargi road has not been handed over by Karnataka Government. The Mysore-Ooty road in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are being developed and maintained as per the availability of fund and *inter-se* priority of works. There is no proposal to declare the remaining stretches of the road as a National Highway since emphasis is given for the development of existing National Highways.

Upgradation of Non-Major Ports

1746. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether State Governments have called for soft funding from Central Government for constructing minor ports;

(b) if so, whether State Governments have also called for good rail and road connectivity to minor ports;

(c) whether Government plan to prepare over 100 non-major ports in the country to handle large vessels and chalked out comprehensive strategy to enhance port capacity from 600 million tonnes to 2000 million tonnes by 2016;

(d) whether Government are planning to upgrade non-major ports as one of the strategy; and